

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-15 were previously pending in the application, of which claims 6-11 are withdrawn. Claims 3 and 13 have been canceled. Therefore, claims 1, 2, 4-12, 14 and 15 are now pending in the application.

Applicants' attorney, Mark Garscia, conducted an in-person interview with Examiner Willse on May 24, 2007. Applicants' attorney and the Examiner discussed rejection of the claims over Reljica-Kostic, DE 4109941 A1, and various claim amendments that could overcome the rejection. Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for his time and effort in conducting the interview.

Claims 1-5 and 12-15 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) over Reljica-Kostic, DE 4109941 A1. Claims 3 and 13 have been cancelled. Additionally, Applicants have amended claims 1 and 12 to recite wherein the tubular section defines a plurality of openings, and wherein the base plate comprises a section that extends in a direction away from the top plate and that engages with the tubular section. In contrast, Reljica-Kostic does not teach or suggest the noted limitations of claims 1 and 12.

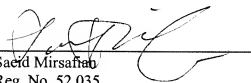
On pages 2 and 3 of the Office action, the Examiner states that Figures 3-6 of Reljica-Kostic show "a tubular section 18 or 18', an integral flange-like base plate 52, a flange-like top plate integral with component 16, and an elastic member 14. The optional protective cover 70 can alternatively be interpreted as one of the top and bottom plates so that the embodiment depicted in Figures 1, 2, and 9 is likewise applicable to the instant claims." Reljica-Kostic, however, does not teach or suggest that the base plate 52 comprises a section that extends in a direction away from the top plate (flange-like section of component 16) and engages with the elastic member 14. As shown in FIG. 3 of Reljica-Kostic, the base plate 52 has a section that extends toward the top plate rather than in a direction away from the top plate. Furthermore, the elastic member 14 does not define a plurality of openings, as recited in claims 1 and 12.

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For the foregoing reasons, Applicants believe that claims 1 and 12, and dependent claims 2, 4, 5, 14 and 15 are patentable over Reljica-Kostic.

Consideration and allowance of the claims are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
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